

COMMENTS ON 'HOLY WAR FROM BAGHDAD TO CASABLANCA'

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[Article by Magdi Allam: "Holy War from Baghdad to Casablanca—Khomeyni Establishes His Own International"]

[Text] On the way Back From Iran, February

"Death to the U.S.!" is the first banner I see from the Alitalia Airbus as I arrived at Tehran airport. It is on the face of an office building off to one side, printed in gigantic letters, and it dates back to 1979. At the airport entrance, another banner: "Islamic Republic: neither Western nor Eastern." Inside the customs area the wall graffiti are numerous: "Death to the USSR", "Death to Israel" and "Death to France." These are just the most recent and are indicative of the enemies Khomeyni's regime has made in addition to the "Great Satan", the U.S.

In an attempt to extricate itself from the increasing isolation and to respond to the mass media hostile to Iran, local authorities picked the revolution's fifth anniversary to stage a large scale meeting for "faithful Khomeyni followers," "sympathizers" and "friends" from about 40 countries as well as some "objective" individuals. In this last category were found 20 newsmen from different countries.

As I wait for my bags, a young man in his 30's, bold in demeanor, excitement in his eyes and his voice, approached me. He introduced himself as a Palestinian living in Brazil. "Brother," he said, "what country are you from?" "Egypt! Dear brother, how is the Islamic revolution doing in Egypt? Is the victory of Islam over Mubarak's atheist regime near?" There is much euphoria and naivete here, but the important fact is that this is where the first "Revolutionary Islamic International" of the 20th century is about to meet.

This initiative comes just 2 weeks after the meeting of the Casablanca Islamic Conference, the official Pan-Islamic Organization, shunned by Iran, which labelled it a "plot engineered by the United States." The "guest" delegations are lodged at the Esteghlal (former Hilton) Hotel, in the capital's outskirts. The lobby is filled with "Pasadaran" (Revolutionary Guards) and with long banners hung on the walls with the inscriptions "Long Life To Khomeyni, To the Coming of the Mahdi, the Messiah," "For the continuation of the Prophet's line until the establishment of the government of faith and martyrdom everywhere in the world."

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My first meeting is with a Jordanian (Zam Al Tarabul) member of the "Movement of the Children of the Koran", the organization of Khomeyni supporters. He was condemned to death in his country and now lives in Tehran. The outline of the interview's salient points: "Our organization has made important inroads within the army. We have murdered Jordanian diplomats abroad and we have carried out the dynamite attacks that recently have shaken Jordan. Last year our attempt to blow up the U.S. embassy in Amman failed. Our objective: we want King Hussein's head and we want to establish an Islamic republic."

Returning from a visit to the Majlis (Parliament), where we were received by President Hajetolleslam Hashemi Rafsanjani, on the bus I met a member of the Moroccan delegation. King Hassan had recently accused Khomeyni of being behind the popular revolts that have occurred throughout the whole country. "It is true," claimed Abu Mohammed, the pseudonym for this Moroccan "brother". "The revolt was instigated by the Moroccan Islamic movement, a Khomeyni-inspired organization. It is headed by Abdel Salam Iassin, who is now in jail, and we publish the magazine entitled AL JANAA (Islamic Community). The battle for Islam in Morocco is also carried out by the "Islamic Moroccan Youth", an organization led by Abdel Karim Moreliah, presently living in France, who publishes the AL MUJAHID (Fighter for Islam) magazine. Before getting off the bus, in chorus, a loud "Death to Hassan, to Bourghiba, to Mubarak and to Assad" was heard.

Honor to the Martyrs Who Killed Sadat

In the evening, the national radio broadcasted an interview with another "brother," in this case, one from Egypt. His name is Kemal Al Shiarbasi, 30 years old, and is a student in West Germany. He is a member of "Al Jihad," the organization that was responsible for the murder of Sadat. "There is a great deal of cooperation between the Islamic Republic and Al Jihad," he claimed. "It is a sacred duty to follow the Imam Khomeyni." He goes on to explain that in Egypt there are other integrated organizations that "cooperate" with Iran: "Al Takiir Val Hijra" (Repentance and Exodus) founded by (Shukri Mustafa); the "Party for Islamic Liberation"; the "Organization of the Kotbiun" (from Saïed Korb, the Ideologue of the Moslem Brotherhood); and the "Cynd Allah" organization (Soldiers of God). In Tehran an important road has been named after Khaled Islambuli, the actual trigger-man in the Sadat assassination. He has also been memorialized in a postage stamp on the anniversary of his being sentenced to death.

In addition to Jordanians, Moroccans and Egyptians, this "Revolutionary Islamic International" also hosted representatives of Gulf Arab countries that are members of the "Liberation Movement of the Arabian Peninsula," representatives of the African Islamic countries (Senegal, Nigeria and Mali), Asian Islamic countries (Pakistanis and Indians) and even French, Americans and Swedes. Relations of a Privileged" nature link Iran with Iraq and Lebanese Shittes whose leaders, the Hajatolleslam (Mohammad Bakr Al Hakim) and the Ayatollah (Mohammad Fadlallah) reside in Tehran. The latter is the figure Khomeyni would like to see take the place of the late Musa Sadr.

Therefore it is true that Iran has a fifth column inside Arab and Islamic countries, made up of fanatical young men ready to sacrifice themselves for the triumph of the ideal of the resurgence of the "Umma", (Islamic Nation) as exposed by Khomeyni. However, it is also true that this is just one side of the coin, and at the same time, Iran's international relations are characterized by a surprising sense of political pragmatism. Let us take the case of its two Arab "allies", Syria and Libya. The Syrian Government, which is lay and a minority government, forcefully represses revolts which are brought about by vast segments of the population, which is Sunni Muslim. Their leaders had viewed the advent of the Islamic Revolution with great hopes and had forged close links with Khomeyni in 1979. Nevertheless, 1 year after the war with Iraq broke out, Khomeyni chose to be the ally of Assad. The enemy of the common enemy became a friend, and the Syrian Muslims were left to their fate.

This deep-rooted ambiguity to this day keeps Syrian-Iranian relations on a razor's edge: they are made compatible by the common goal of wanting to overthrow Saddam Husayn, but they are in a disagreement over all other matters, such as the future of Iraq and Lebanon, where Khomeyni would like to see Islamic republic established, while Assad, understandably, does not agree. With regard to Libya, Khomeyni decided not to normalize bilateral relations and did not welcome any Libyan emissaries in the wake of the mysterious disappearance of the Imam Musa Sadr. Nevertheless, with Qadhdhafi's offers of weapons, he changed his attitude and today the relationship between the two countries is defined as "strategic".

This same pragmatic policy characterized the relationship with the two super-powers. With the "hostage crisis" slowly receding into the background, commercial links are gradually back on the increase. Tehran first of all reimbursed its debts owed to public organizations and private banks in America and in return, Washington unfroze funds deposited at the time by the Shah and has furnished Iran, through third parties, with weapons and spare parts. An illustrative example: In 1981 imports from Iran had dropped to \$63 million. In 1982 they were about 10 times that much, totalling \$624 million.

In the Meantime, However, Italian Arms Arrive

Iranian authorities have maintained good relations with the USSR, even though local Tudeh communists have been accused of spying for Moscow. "Plotting on part of the Tudeh does not affect our relations with Moscow in a negative manner," we were told by Foreign Minister Velayati. "The USSR is our neighbor and we want to have friendly relations with them, based on mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs". Several hundred Soviet advisors are engaged at the Isfahan steel mill as well as at the Atrak Dam construction site, along with common border.

By and large, West European or nonaligned countries enjoy a favorable position in matters concerning commerce. These countries, in addition, are also able to furnish, directly or indirectly, different types of weapons. Italy is in

the forefront of these weapons supplying countries. Also, Italy is the most important importer of Iranian goods and the second most important exporter of goods to Iran, following Japan. Italy sells weapons through third countries and middlemen and Rome has become a transit center for U.S. arms destined for Iran. The importance Iran attaches to Italy is illustrated by the assignment of Vatican ambassador Sayed (Hadi Khomeyni) as head of the Iranian propaganda apparatus for all of West Europe.

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